

BSM935 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH

Academic Year 2012/13

Number of Aston Credits: 15

Number of ECTS Credits: 7.5

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

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Pre-requisites for the Module:

None.

Mode of Attendance:

On campus

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The objectives of the module are to develop the skills to:

- > appraise the quality, value and limitations of international business research undertaken by others;
- > commission applied research in international business, and
- > use research results in formulating strategies and performing other business tasks.
- > Devise and communicate a clear research plan to both academic and nonacademic users.

These skills will be of value to students in their future business careers since, in a fast changing business environment, the ability to update knowledge throughout the career is essential. They will also provide an introduction to research for students who wish to go on to more advanced research.

After completing this module, the students will have:

- > a broad understanding of research areas and questions in international business
- > the ability to evaluate business research undertaken by others, and
- > formulate research questions and commission research.

Module Content:

- Week 1** Introduction.
Purpose of the module: to provide information on how to do International Business Research
What it links in to, and what they should get out of it
What is expected of a dissertation:
Use of sources
Guidelines, plagiarism, regulations.
- Week 2** Quantitative Research in International Business
Use of secondary data.
Data sources
Formulating hypotheses and critical thinking
- Week 3** Qualitative Research in International Business
Issues that encourage qualitative research and the challenges with doing this.
- Week 4** Writing a Dissertation: Academic or Sector / Business Appraisal.
How does a Sector / Business Appraisal type dissertation differ from an academic one. What should go into the proposal, structure and organisation.



Week 5 Effective literature searching and writing a literature review

Week 6 Starting Research – Writing a Literature Review

Individual Topics: This will introduce the two broad areas of International Business research and present the options for how research can be done in each of these areas. Students will be required to formulate plans for how to research in each of these areas. The lecture slots will present some conceptual pieces and key issues in the literature.

Week 7 Studies on FDI.

Week 8 Studies of the Strategy of the Multinational Enterprise

Week 9 Surgery Session and discussion of the assignment: Doing Research for the first time. Students will be able to discuss with specific issues with the module leaders. The students will be expected to form an idea of the area of research they are interested in, proposed methodology, and any potential data sources

Week 10 Completion of assignment (dissertation proposal)

Corporate Connections:

Many of the sessions towards the end of the course draw on work carried out in collaboration with national and international policy makers, such as UNCTAD, UKTI, the World Bank, European Commission and the DTI. In addition, sessions also draw on case studies developed in conjunction with multinational firms. It should be stressed however that this is a research course, and as such focuses on academic research design and methodology.

International Dimensions:

The entire module is international in nature, with a focus on research in different aspects of international business.

Contribution of Research:

This is a research led course, as the name implies. In addition to giving students insight as to how to do international business research, it will also offer an introduction to the type of research that is carried out in international business, at Aston and elsewhere. This is indicated particularly by the content of weeks 2-3 and 6-8.



Method of Teaching:

Lectures, seminars, syndicate group work and private study over ten weeks. The lectures and seminars will include introduction to the different areas of international business research, general principles and methodologies of doing such research and critical examination of actual research projects by staff and former students. A number of members of staff with expertise and experience in different areas of international business research will contribute to the module.

Lectures, syndicate work and the use of blackboard

Method of Assessment and Feedback:

Assignment 1 75% There are two assignments designed to develop a dissertation proposal.

Students will be required to submit a research proposal (2500 words maximum) by the end of the first teaching block.

The proposal will require:

- > An abstract (summary).
- > Statement of research question and issues to be investigated.
- > Theoretical context and propositions to be tested.
- > The expected implications of the research project for organizations.
- > Preliminary literature review. explain whether your dissertation will be testing hypotheses. If yes, which hypotheses; if no, explain the reasons, why not, linked to subject matter and methodology.
- > Data sources and the justification for the choice.
- > Research design.
- > Methodology to be employed. briefly mention what kind of methodology you anticipate using for this dissertation with regards to the Theme/Topic selected, and the nature of the research.
- > Details of any ethical considerations and steps taken to meet potential ethical concerns.

Feedback will be provided by the assignment feedback forms.

Assignment 2 (25%)

Students will be required to prepare and present their research project using a poster format. Templates will be provided, and during the third term students will attend a session where they will present their posters, explain their research idea to both faculty and students. The posters will then be submitted and marked.

Learning Hours:

Lectures	18
Formal Group Work	9
Other Group Work / Private Study and Research	75
Completion of Assignments	48
Total	150

The following essential and recommended readings are subject to change. Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources.

Essential Reading:

Colin Fisher, *Researching and writing a dissertation for business students*, Prentice Hall ISBN 0-273-68334-9.

Please note, second edition is now out, though first addition also covers the same material.

Gill J & Johnson P (1997) *Research Methods for Managers*, Paul Chapman Publishers

Gummesson E (2000) *Qualitative Methods in Management Research*, Sage

Saunders M N, Lewis P and Thornhill A (2003) *Research Methods for Business Students*, Prentice Hall

Schollhammer, H (1994) "Strategies and methodologies in international business and comparative management research", *Management International Review*, vol. 34 (1) pp. 5-20

Werner, S. (2002) Recent Developments in International Management Research: A Review of 20 Top Management Journals. *Journal of Management*, vol. 28(3) 277–305